

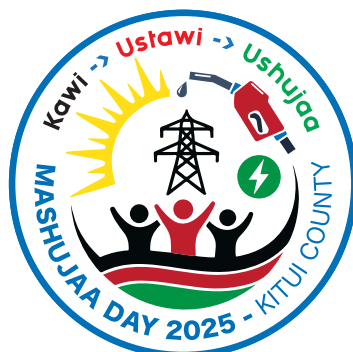


REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**NATIONAL ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON.
WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE DEFENCE FORCES, DURING THE MASHUJAA
DAY CELEBRATIONS**

OCTOBER 20, 2025

ITHOOKWE STADIUM, KITUI COUNTY



**Distinguished Guests,
Fellow Citizens,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Today, we gather as a nation, as one people, here at Ithookwe Stadium in Kitui, to celebrate Mashujaa Day, our National Heroes' Day.
2. Mashujaa Day is an occasion for remembrance, for celebration, for reflection, and for renewal.
3. As you all know, yesterday we bid farewell to one of our country's most consequential and impactful sons: A towering statesman, a resolute patriot, and a quintessential hero, the Right Honourable Raila Amolo Odinga, our former Prime Minister.
4. This is the man, the legend, the pan-Africanist, to whom we dedicate this Mashujaa Day.
5. It is for this reason, fellow citizens, in his solemn memory, that I invite us all to now stand and observe a moment of silence in honour and celebration of his remarkable life and service to our great country, our continent, and to humanity.
6. Sons and daughters of our motherland, Kenya, Raila Amolo Odinga aspired and laboured for a Kenya that is free, fair, governed by the rule of law, and filled with limitless opportunity for all.
7. Baba envisioned and fought for a nation where, in the immortal words of our National Anthem, justice is everyone's shield and defender; where we all dwell in unity, peace, and liberty; and a Kenya that has plenty within its borders.



8. It goes without saying that it is precisely because of great and irrepressible giants like Raila Odinga that we find within ourselves the courage and inspiration to go further, to dream bigger, and to pursue higher ideals.
9. For greatness and nobility are never achieved by settling for the ordinary or the comfortable. They are seized by those who dare to push the frontiers of possibility; by those who refuse to be confined by what is, but instead reach boldly for what could be.
10. It is in that restless, relentless pursuit of a higher ideal, in that unyielding spirit of aspiration, that humanity advances and nations rise. For it is only by stretching beyond our limits that we discover our true strength and fulfil our full destiny.
11. Fellow citizens, as we emerge from a week of profound sorrow and reflection, and as the nation continues to observe the seven days of mourning on the passing of our former prime minister, it is both fitting and worthy that we anchor this year's Mashujaa Day celebrations in the extraordinary and consequential life of our departed legend, the Right Honourable Odinga.
12. In honouring his memory, we also draw from his journey enduring lessons of courage, service, and unyielding love for country.
13. The first lesson that Baba taught us is to put country above self. Time and again, he reminded us that no disagreement is greater than our unity, no ambition more important than our peace, and no personal interest higher than the welfare of our nation.
14. He famously declared that he would shake the hands of his rivals whether he won or whether he lost because he loved Kenya more than he loved Raila Amolo Odinga. That was the measure of a great man.



15. Earlier this year, when I invited him to address our Cabinet retreat, Baba reiterated the need to ensure, above all else, that Kenya remains a stable and secure nation.
16. He reminded us that we may hold lofty visions and great ambitions, that we may dream big, daring dreams, but without a country and a stable political environment, they would remain mere wishes.
17. Perhaps more significantly, he told us that an imperfect nation striving for perfection is far better than one that is consumed by chaos and anarchy.
18. And he could readily point to countries in our region that were once stable but later descended into turmoil and disorder, and decades on, they are yet to regain stability, their people still enduring untold suffering and loss.
19. This is the critical lesson that those who criticised and faulted Baba for working with me to stabilise the nation forget, or refuse to acknowledge, or they just simply don't care. When some saw the opportunity to bring down their competitors, even if it meant bringing down the country, Baba chose the stability of Kenya.
20. For Agwambo, the spectre of a failed State was too grave to contemplate. He understood that leadership is not about personal pride, but about preserving the Republic; not about victory in politics, but about preserving the stability of Kenya.
21. Second, fellow citizens, Baba's love for Kenya was deep, steadfast, and unconditional. He once told us that if he were to die and God asked where he would wish to be born again, he would say without hesitation: Take me back to Kenya.



22. Such was the depth of his devotion to our beloved nation. He knew that Kenya, like all nations, was not perfect; that nation-building was a work in progress, that is only renewed with every generation.
23. He understood that we are an imperfect people, always striving towards a more perfect union. Yet even in our flaws, he saw magic and beauty; in our struggles, he discerned promise; and in our contradictions, he could pick out hope and unity.
24. To Raila Odinga, there was no place on earth more worthy of devotion, no people more deserving of faith, and no dream more noble than the Kenyan dream.
25. Third, Baba's life was an example of always closing ranks for the common good. When our nation faced turbulence last year, for example, and I reached out across the political divide, Baba was the first to come to the table to help steady the ship of state, leading to the formation of the broad-based government that has since stabilised the economy and the nation.
26. That is what heroes do: When the stakes are high, they rise above partisanship and put the country first.
27. Even during the last election campaigns, when fate placed us once again on opposite sides of the political divide, Baba spoke words that will echo through generations. He said: "I have been to the mountaintop; I have seen the glory land. I may not get there with you, but together, you will get there."
28. In those words lay the essence of his leadership: Selfless, visionary, and anchored in faith that Kenya's destiny transcends any one individual. He reminded us that collaboration, even with rivals, is not an act of political convenience, but a sacred pact with posterity.



29. For Baba, it was never about him becoming President; it was about Kenya having a good President, and Kenya moving from third-world status to first-world in as short a time as possible, so that we- as a people and a nation- can realise our true potential.
30. The “glory land” that he saw at the mountaintop is the better, greater, and more perfect union to which we must now, on this Mashujaa Day, dedicate ourselves anew.
31. Fourth, our former prime minister was a foremost preacher of national unity. He tirelessly reminded leaders and citizens alike that our overarching identity is not defined by tribe, region, or creed, but by the sacred bond of being Kenyan.
32. He often urged us to think of Kenya first, to let the idea of one nation under one flag rise above all else. And he lived by that creed.
33. When, in 2002, he stood before the nation and declared “Kibaki Tosha!”, it was not because he was unaware of where President Mwai Kibaki came from; it was because he saw beyond geography and ethnicity; he saw Kenya as one united nation under God.
34. Fellow countrymen and women, it would, therefore, be a desecration of his legacy if we were to allow ourselves to be divided by sectarian interests, by the peddlers of hate, or by the “see-nothing-good-about-Kenya” battalion.
35. The fifth lesson from Baba’s life is one of unshakeable faith in the future. He was a dyed-in-the-wool eternal optimist. Through every trial, setback, and triumph, the Right Honourable Raila Odinga believed that Kenya’s best days were still ahead.



He endured prison, persecution, and political defeat, yet never surrendered to bitterness or gave in to hopelessness.

36. His optimism wasn't anchored on naïvety; it was courage in motion. His life was a constant reminder that no setback is final, no dream too distant, and no obstacle insurmountable for a people determined and united by purpose.
37. At this juncture, fellow patriots, allow me to share reflections on the future of our great country, drawn from my intimate and wide-ranging conversations with the Right Hon Raila Amolo Odinga, in the final months of his remarkable journey, as well as with leaders from across the political divide.
38. In our engagements, Baba often spoke with immense passion - and, at times, frustration - about the pace of our national progress.
39. He would often wonder why nations like South Korea, Singapore, or Malaysia, which were once at par with Kenya just a few decades ago, had leapt forward to first-world status while we still grapple with the basics.
40. In those moments of honesty and deep introspection, we came to a shared conclusion that the true driver of national development is leadership; not leadership focused on the next election, but leadership that aspires to impact the next generation; leadership that dares to dream beyond its time and even its capacity; leadership that is bold, visionary, and relentless in pursuit of the common good.
41. And we agreed that if Kenya is to attain first-world status within our lifetime, as it must, we should set for ourselves daring and audacious goals and pursue them with unwavering focus.



42. It is this very conviction that has guided my engagements with leaders and stakeholders from across the political divide.
43. I have consulted my former boss, the Fourth President of the Republic, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta. I have held discussions with a majority of Members of Parliament, Governors, and grassroots leaders from every corner of our nation.
44. And I will continue to engage, because Kenya's progress must never be a partisan pursuit; it is a national, inclusive mission.
45. Through these deliberations, I have arrived at a clear conclusion that although we have made commendable progress in stabilising the nation over the last three years, the time has come to take the country to the next level. And to do so, we must act decisively on at least four national priorities.
46. Our first priority is food security. We cannot speak of prosperity while spending over KSh500 billion every year importing food, including maize, wheat, rice, sugar, and edible oils. This is not just an economic burden; it is a threat to our sovereignty.
47. The only viable path toward this goal, fellow citizens, is through the expansion of irrigation and the modernisation of our agriculture. Rain-fed farming can no longer sustain our growing population or our aspirations.
48. That is why we have now set an ambitious target to build at least 50 mega dams across Kenya to bring at least 2 million acres under irrigation. Let me emphasise that this is not a far-fetched dream; it is a necessity that must be realised within the next decade. We must become not only a food-secure nation but also a major exporter of farm produce in the coming years.



49. Our second priority is enhanced value addition, agro processing and manufacturing through industrialisation. To transform Kenya into a prosperous, job-creating, wealthy nation, we must become a country that makes things, not merely buys or imports them; a country that exports finished goods, not raw materials; a country where industries absorb labour, spur innovation, and expand wealth across every region.
50. We are already laying the foundation for this transformation. Through the Africa Growth and Industrialisation Initiative (AGII) and in partnership with the African Export-Import Bank, we are establishing Special Economic Zones in Vipingo, Dongo Kundu, Naivasha, and other regions. These zones will host textile, agro-processing, assembly, and light manufacturing industries, creating tens of thousands of jobs.
51. At the county level, we are rolling out County Aggregation and Industrial Parks in all 47 counties. These parks will link farmers to processors, entrepreneurs to markets, and small enterprises to national and regional value chains.
52. We are unwavering in our vision that everything Kenya produces must be processed in Kenya: Tea must leave Kenya not as raw leaves, but as packaged excellence; coffee not as cherries, but as premium blends; cotton not as lint, but as fabric and fashion; hides not as raw skin, but as leather shoes and bags branded Made in Kenya.
53. But we cannot industrialise without reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy. That is why we have set our sights on expanding Kenya's energy generation capacity from the current 2,300 megawatts to at least 10,000 megawatts within the next decade.



54. As a former Minister for Energy, Hon Raila Odinga was a strong advocate for the rapid expansion of our energy capacity through multiple sources, including hydro, geothermal, solar, wind, and nuclear. With abundant energy, we shall power factories, light every home, and drive Kenya to become the industrial hub of East Africa and the continent.
55. Our third critical area of focus is infrastructure development. Again, Baba, who also served as Minister for Roads, Public Works, and Housing under the late President Mwai Kibaki, often reminded me that no economy can flourish without world-class infrastructure.
56. It is in this context that we have committed to dual at least 1,000km of major highways, including the Rironi-Nakuru-Mau Summit-Eldoret-Malaba, Makutano-Embu-Meru, Kitengela-Namanga, Mombasa-Nairobi and Marua-Nanyuki-Isiolo roads, among others. At the same time, we must construct an additional 10,000km of new tarmac roads linking farmers, traders, and manufacturers to markets across the nation; and complete the Standard Gauge Railway from Naivasha to Kisumu and onward to Malaba, seamlessly connecting Kenya to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC, the very heart of the African Continental Free Trade Area dream.
57. Fellow citizens, to some, these projects may seem too ambitious, perhaps even out of reach. But this is precisely where bold, visionary, and heroic leadership comes into play, the kind that Hon Raila Odinga embodied.
58. It is the reason that on this Mashujaa Day, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions and enduring legacy, the Government and people of Kenya inscribe Hon Raila Odinga's name among the foremost of our heroes, under the public seal of the Republic.



59. On behalf of a grateful nation, and through the authority vested in me as President, I have today posthumously conferred upon the Right Honourable Raila Amolo Odinga the highest honour of the Republic, the Chief of the Order of the Golden Heart of Kenya (C.G.H.).
60. Fellow citizens, I recall that when I spoke during Raila Amolo Odinga's State Funeral, I wondered: Where will another like Raila come from?
61. The truth is that there will forever be only one Raila Amolo Odinga: A singular spirit, a towering patriot, a hero for the ages.
62. But if we, the people he so deeply loved and served, choose to live by the lessons he taught us; to love Kenya more than we love ourselves; to put unity above division; to aspire for greater, and to serve with courage and conviction, then we can become a great nation of 50 million heroes.
63. And in doing so, Kenya will rise to heights once thought unimaginable within our generation. That, fellow patriots, is our noble challenge on this Mashujaa Day.

**Happy Mashujaa Day,
God bless you.
God bless the Republic of Kenya.
I thank you.**

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